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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
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TO : THE PRESIDENT
FROM : ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR. 
SUBJECT: UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD POLAND

The prospects for East-West relations and our foreign policy under your Administration will depend very much on the skill and discipline we bring to our Polish policy at this critical juncture.

The Polish Government, the Soviets (privately), and some elements of the American left are now saying that the martial law regime was established in Poland by Polish nationalists in order to avoid a Soviet intervention. Whatever truth there is to this -- and there may be some -- it is largely irrelevant.

The martial law regime will not resolve Poland's massive problems. Whether Jaruzelski succeeds or fails in restoring "order" and chastening the workers' movement, the Polish economy will remain a shambles -- worse off than before the military assumed power -- requiring large doses of foreign assistance merely to function. Economic deterioration and distress are therefore likely whatever happens, and are classic triggers for violence and disorder. The spread of disorder, should it occur, would almost inevitably prompt Soviet intervention. Thus, the prospect of Soviet intervention is as real under martial law as it was before.

There is both danger and opportunity for us in this situation. The danger of Soviet intervention is the same as it was or worse, because the economic situation will be worse. The opportunity, though modest, is new. Whereas before the regime could argue that Solidarity was responsible for Poland's economic troubles, it will now carry the exclusive responsibility for the mess. This may endow the prospect of assistance from us with some leverage.

Deterring Soviet intervention and restoring the reform process should be the twin objectives of American policy. They are functionally interrelated. If economic breakdown and Soviet intervention are to be avoided (they may be unavoidable), there must be restoration of reform and a process of true negotiation and compromise among Poles. Over the long term, Poland's problems can only be managed and resolved through such a process. In the short term, it is also the key to deterring violence and Soviet intervention.

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Like most juntas, the martial law regime has proclaimed its commitment to continue the reforms. But its ultimate intentions are unclear. Internment of most of Solidarity's top leadership and of many other political activists is not a promising sign. It also leaves the regime with no responsible negotiating partners. Walesa's own status is not clear, but it is evident that he is not a free agent. Furthermore, the communications blackout has left workers and their leaders with no good way of organizing for either resistance or negotiation with the authorities, and thus heightened the chances of spontaneous outbreaks. By dampening resistance in this fashion, the regime has by the same token made it impossible to move out of the crisis by negotiation with leaders who could deliver on agreements made.

In this situation, we must walk a narrow line between two dangerous and unnecessary policy approaches. On the one hand, if we are too passive and Jaruzelski succeeds in restoring "order" and destroying Solidarity, we will have acquiesced in repression with little more than a whimper. The Soviets would certainly draw conclusions from such a U.S. posture. On the other hand, U.S. statements that can be portrayed after the fact as provocations or incitements could saddle us with the onus for breakdown, violence, and possible Soviet intervention, should they occur.

The wise approach, for now at least, is to insist publicly and privately that the only realistic solution to Poland's problems lies in restoration of a genuine process of negotiation and reconciliation among Poles:

-- Publicly, our stance must be keyed to events, rather than ideology. We must make clear our opposition to the abridgment of civil and political liberties in Poland, and our commitment to human rights. But we should stress, at the same time, that this approach is reinforced in current circumstances by the eminently practical fact that, without restoration of real politics, Poles cannot solve the problems facing them.

-- Privately, we should bring our leverage on the Polish Government to bear at every opportunity. That leverage -- particularly in the economic area -- is considerable, although not sufficient if Jaruzelski and the Soviets have decided to end the Polish "experiment" no matter what the cost. We should urge the regime to moderation and dialogue, on grounds that this is the only practical approach to solving Poland's problems

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and avoiding massive damage to international peace. On the same basis, we should be willing to withhold or proffer help, depending on how events proceed within Poland.

This approach will require extraordinary discipline within the U.S. Government. I believe you must take the lead in enunciating our public posture and in enforcing the necessary discipline on all U.S. spokesmen. If you agree, your public statement tomorrow will be the keynote of a firm, consistent policy. I have attached a recommended text.

ATTACHMENT: Recommended text.

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PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON POLAND

We are receiving a steady flow of reports indicating that the imposition of Martial Law in Poland has led to the arrest and confinement, in prisons as well as detention camps, of thousands of Polish trade union leaders and intellectuals. Factories are being seized by security forces and workers beaten. These are extremely disturbing developments, for they point to a sharp reversal of the process of democratic reconstruction that has been under way in Poland for the past year and one half. It is difficult to see how Poland can emerge from its economic and political crisis when coercion takes the place of negotiations and compromise. All these acts are in gross violation of the principles enunciated in the Helsinki final accords to which Poland is a signatory.

We continue to monitor the situation closely, well aware that little occurs in Polish ruling circles without the full knowledge of the Soviet Union.

It is important that the position of the United States Government be clear to all. We view the current situation in Poland in grave terms, particularly the increasing use of force against an unarmed population and violations of the basic civil rights of the Polish people. Accommodation, which is essential to a resolution of Poland's difficulties, obviously cannot be reached in an atmosphere of intimidation and disruption of the

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means of communication. Violence invites violence and threatens to plunge Poland into chaos.

We urge all parties in Poland to reestablish conditions that will make constructive negotiations and compromise possible. We, for our part, are prepared to do our share to assist a Poland which has restored such conditions to overcome its economic difficulties. And finally, we believe that the Polish people must be permitted to resolve their own problems, free of coercion and outside intervention.